



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

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Tech-Savvy Sex Predators Using Cell Phones to Contact Children

AG Bruning urges parents to monitor activity

Note: A sound bite on this topic will be available shortly at: <http://www.ago.ne.gov>

(Lincoln, Neb) Attorney General Jon Bruning today urged parents to protect their children in the wireless world. In addition to computers, Attorney General's Office investigators are seeing more sex predators using cell phones to contact kids.

"Tech-savvy predators know kids use cell phones to communicate and they take advantage of it," said Bruning. "As criminals become more sophisticated, it's critical for parents to take an active role, understand the technology and use the resources and tools available to help protect their children."

According to a 2008 study by Harris Interactive, approximately 79 percent of teenagers ages 13 to 19 have a cell phone. Remember many cell phones are basically a computer you can put in your pocket.

Here are some things parents can do to help protect their children:

- Lots of wireless service providers offer parental controls and filtering tools that can block harmful content from the Internet and limit who and when your child can call or text.
- If a cell phone is used mainly for your child to check in, pick a phone without a camera, texting and access to the Internet or have the features turned off by your provider.
- Take your child's phone and look through it, see who he or she is sending messages to and read them.
- Tell your child not to give out his or her address, phone number, Social Security number, or full name within earshot of strangers and not to text personal information or send photos.
- Encourage your kids to talk to you if they receive threatening or uncomfortable messages.
- Children should never agree to an in-person meeting with someone they've met online.

The Attorney General's Office is partnering with Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh and Sen. Tom White on the Child Protection Bill. This bill expands the crime of online enticement to include communications through electronic devices other than computers, like cell phones. Under this legislation, it's also illegal for the most heinous registered sex-offenders to access social-networking sites.

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